



Green Party
of Manitoba

Platform

September 21st, 2011

www.greenparty.mb.ca

Authorized by the Chief Financial Officer

GREEN PARTY OF MANITOBA

Platform Summary, September 21, 2011

Manitoba is rich and diverse in landscape, culture, and economy. We think our province is the best place to live on this earth and the Green Party wants to keep it that way. Green Leader James Beddome and our team of candidates are working for Green Economic Reform so that your family can enjoy rewarding jobs, safe communities and clean living. Your Green vote means that you want to rebuild the local Manitoba businesses which are the foundation of our economy. You want local food, local jobs and local quality for your family. Your Green vote means that you want to protect our lakes, our air and our children's health from toxic overload. You want responsible management and clear standards. Your Green vote means that you want balanced decisions which make life better for Manitobans today and work forward to a sustainable economy

Your Green vote means:

- ✓ No to Bipole III. The world is shifting to renewable energy creation and conservation. Let's put our money into the energy of the future, not squander it on antiquated dams and wasteful corridors.
- ✓ Yes to a real end to poverty. 80% of social dollars are wasted on bureaucracy. Universal Basic Income puts 100% into the pockets of the people who need a hand up. Out-of-work civil servants are welcome to apply.
- ✓ No to more criminals. Keep kids from becoming criminals by providing real Youth opportunities. Bring healing to hurting families with Restorative justice.
- ✓ Yes to free post-secondary education. Education is the key to ending the poverty trap. Our hardworking students deserve our support.
- ✓ Yes to preventative health care. We can stretch the health dollars with more nurse practitioners, actively encourage fitness, and reduce chronic illness with natural foods and common sense.
- ✓ No to worn out roads and dangerous travel. Greens would move freight off the highways and onto the railways.
- ✓ Yes to free public transit. Fast efficient buses which encourage use.
- ✓ No to nuclear storage or transport in Manitoba. There is no affordable way to manage nuclear power safely. The risks are just too great.
- ✓ Yes to a clean Lake Winnipeg. Everyone must do our part. Compost nutrients. Rebuild cleansing wetlands. Keep city waste and farm waste out of the lake.
- ✓ No to partisan bickering. No party has all the right answers all the time. Good Governance means we all work together for policies which help Manitoba families.

It's time to vote with your heart and for your family's future.

VOTE GREEN!

GREEN PARTY OF MANITOBA
PLATFORM released September 21, 2011

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Green Party of Manitoba is proud to present to you this 2011 electoral platform. We have put forth a comprehensive action plan that will strengthen our economy, improve the health of our population, care for our children, parents and grandparents and highlight the importance of education.

As you browse our platform, we hope you will notice that many of our action plan items address several issues.

With your vote, we believe we can create a society that supports new jobs and economic activity, without sacrificing our health and the health of our planet.

Manitoba Greens are here to stay and our platform is designed to support Manitoba and its citizens for generations and generations to come. We are not just in it for the next 4 years; we want to make a better Manitoba

We hope you will contact us about how you can get involved.

II. BRINGING THE ECONOMY HOME

A. Saving Money for Manitoban Families

Rising costs of living, households that require childcare and elder care; and the costs of post-secondary education put a strain on Manitoban families everywhere. Two solutions exist – increase incomes or decrease costs. Many Manitobans are already working several jobs or working and studying at the same time. Manitoba Greens favour decreasing costs because it can be applied to everyone.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

1. Establish free urban public transportation throughout Manitoba. A free ride to work or school means more money in your pocket and a ~\$70 million dollar injection into the local economy.
2. Assist ordinary Manitobans to make their homes more energy efficient, helping to save money and create jobs at the same time.
3. Reduce tuition fees and improve the quality of education by redirecting inefficient post-secondary tax credits, with a long-term goal of eliminating tuition fees to create universally accessible post-secondary education in Manitoba.
4. Ensure to all Manitobans the security of a basic income, which helps to save money by reducing bureaucracy and removing disincentives that discourage those on social services to look for work.

B. Localizing Production

Manitoba Greens believe that a strong economy is dominated by Manitoban-owned enterprises that produce a variety of goods and services right in your local communities. We recognize that a good economy is only sustainable when it does not threaten the safety and health of Manitobans.

The history of Manitoba is dominated by the extraction of raw products, (grains, livestock, metals, raw lumber, etc.) which we sell to global markets and then buy back in finished form at inflated prices. The jobs that we could create right here in Manitoba are being shipped elsewhere and we are left with the environmental impacts of the above-named activities.

Manitoba Greens are not against trade. Rather, we want to ensure that our trade is sensible, sustainable, and ultimately beneficial to Manitobans

Wherever possible, we will work to support local production.

We promise to offer government support to small Manitoban companies producing goods for local markets, instead of larger multi-national corporations which produce largely for export.

Through this transition, we see the potential to create more jobs. We aim to create a greater diversity and selection of local goods for Manitobans to make our economy more resistant to global price shocks and market down-turns.

Much can be done, within current existing budgets, by redirecting funds away from larger businesses towards smaller enterprise (see our list of examples below), but we acknowledge the challenges in implementing our vision of a localized economy. Manitoban Greens do not shy away from the big changes that are clearly needed to improve the quality of life for Manitobans. Greens exist because we understand that broad sweeping change is necessary.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

1. Promote local production of goods and services used in Manitoba to reduce economic and ecological costs of transportation and keep money in the provincial economy.
2. Diversify Manitoba's economy to avoid over-reliance on any one industry or sector (e.g. hog industry, hydroelectric power, etc) and ensure that Manitoba is able to meet the majority of its needs locally.
3. Implement a "made in Manitoba" purchasing policy for the provincial government.
4. Develop local food systems that greatly reduce the need for transporting our food.
5. Abandon the model of export-oriented agriculture and forestry to ensure that Manitobans can benefit from Manitoba-farmed food on their tables and Manitoba homes and buildings constructed with Manitoba wood.

EXAMPLES

To provide a few examples of how your money, spent by your government, could have been better used to support local production we offer the following examples:

SUBSIDY TO IKEA

\$8 million was given to bring the Swedish retail-giant Ikea into Winnipeg. This money should have been spent supporting numerous Manitoban businesses in making local furniture from local wood instead. Rather than benefiting a single multi-national retailer and creating jobs solely at the retail end, this would support the creation of jobs for: Manitoba woodlot owners, local furniture manufacturers, as well as a diversity of retailers.

SUBSIDY TO TEMBEC

Investigations by Manitoba's Auditor General Carol Bellringer, reveal that shortly before ceasing operations in Manitoba, Quebec based forestry multi-national, Tembec Inc. inappropriately benefited from a payment from the eco-trust program for doing nothing. In addition Tembec benefited from payments to end logging in provincial parks. It was well known that Tembec's operations in Pine Falls were at risk of shutting down, yet despite this it appears that no contingency re-payment provisions were put in place in the event that Tembec ceased it's Pine Falls operations. Green Party of Manitoba freedom of information requests on this matter remain unanswered.

This money should have been spent on helping to re-train workers and promote economic development in the Pine Falls area which undoubtedly has suffered from the loss of a major employer. For example perhaps this money could have been used to retool the plant to produce non-wood paper from agricultural by-products.

C. Green Economics

In a "green" economy, pollution is reduced, industries are competitive and dynamic, communities are safer and jobs are healthier and more plentiful.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

1. Shift taxes off good things like payroll and onto bad things like pollution and waste.
2. Commit ourselves to balanced budgets, debt reduction, and fiscal prudence.
3. Track progress with additional measures such as the Genuine Progress Indicator.
4. Investigate the feasibility of a Manitoba owned bank, modelled on the Bank of North Dakota, so that the people of Manitoba can benefit from the profits of banking.

III. A SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FUTURE

We need energy! We need it to heat our homes, to get us to work, to produce Manitoban goods and to provide a host of useful services. The billion dollar question remains: "What is the most sustainable means of producing energy?"

A. Electricity

The issues surrounding Manitoba Hydro and Bipole III have been particularly contentious in the lead up to the 2011 Manitoba Election. Unfortunately, the "debate" has centred around a few unsubstantiated claims. As a result, the questions that do need to be asked and debated are left unanswered

Manitoba produces more than enough energy to supply our own needs until at least 2020.

Bipole III is only a small portion of the roughly \$20 billion in planned hydro-electric mega-project developments that accompany Bipole III – and which continue to soar in cost!

The primary driving force behind the construction of these new mega-dams and Bipole III is to export power to the U.S.A. Recent investigations by the Manitoba Public Utilities Board have revealed that if we build these new dams, we may be exporting the power at a loss – leaving Manitobans with soaring electricity rates.

Does this make any sense? Why are we subsidizing Americans on the backs of Manitoban ratepayers? Manitoba Greens fully support a crown utility, but it must be managed to benefit the people.

Hydroelectricity has its own ecological impact: flooding, shoreline erosion, mercury contamination, habitat disruption and greenhouse gas emissions!

Dams built in the 1960's and 70's led to the relocation of entire communities, and a legacy of distrust among Aboriginal peoples.

Even the Wuskatim dam, which Manitoba Hydro and the present government boast "causes minimal flooding," will flood nearly 122 acres ($\frac{1}{2}$ km²) of pristine boreal forest. Conawapa and Keeyask will flood even more.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

1. Propose that Manitoba Hydro change its name to Manitoba Energy, reflecting the diverse forms of energy technologies that are available, and focusing on reducing energy consumption first through various programs of incentives and disincentives.
2. Explore and implement renewable forms of energy beyond hydroelectric power – such as the 1000 MW of promised wind energy the NDP has failed to deliver.
3. Use the same piece of land for the disposal of garbage and the installation of wind turbines to minimize their overall impact.
4. We would not support constructing any new hydroelectric mega-dams in Manitoba until a full assessment on the potential for energy conservation has taken place – thereby helping to lower Manitoba's debt obligations, and utility bills at the same time.
5. Ensure that a cumulative ecological assessment of the effects of hydro-electric generation in Manitoba is performed before new hydro-electric dam construction in Manitoba is approved.
6. Immediately begin the Clean Environment Commission review of the interim Lake Winnipeg Regulation and Churchill River Diversion license, ensuring the broadest possible mandate and adequate participant funding for a thorough and diverse review.
7. Make it simple for home-owners and/or businesses to receive payment for unused power delivered to the grid from solar-panels, small-scale wind-turbines, or other alternative energy sources through measures such as a feed-in-tariff (as is already done in Ontario).
8. Ensure all new residential housing units provide true energy reliability through the installation of a 3 KW capacity micro power system. This will ensure that each house is an independent power producer and a power thrifty homeowner will never have to purchase power from a utility provider.
9. Mandate a transition from older designed street lamps, to newer energy efficient LED street lamps, and ensure residential and street lighting will not shine above horizon level, to reduce energy waste and reclaim the night sky from light pollution.

10. Recognize inherent and Treaty rights of Aboriginal people in Manitoba with regards to developments such as hydro-electric mega-projects, mining, forestry, etc.

B. Fossil Fuels

Our entire global economy is reliant on fossil fuels (gasoline, natural gas, diesel, etc.) for energy, but fossil fuel use is also a major source of social and environmental damage.

Fossil fuels are also limited in supply and non-renewable. Most experts believe petroleum production is nearing or past peak production capacity. This will lead to exorbitantly higher fossil fuel prices, as the remaining petroleum will be more expensive to extract and the process will be more damaging to our land and people (eg. Alberta tar sands).

Manitoba's transportation and agricultural sectors are particularly reliant on fossil-fuel energy. A steep rise in gasoline, diesel, and fertilizer (derived from natural gas) costs would place a financial strain on all sectors of Manitoba's economy.

Now is the time to begin the transition away from a fossil-fuel based society, before prices rise and supplies fall.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

-Overall Planning-

1. Develop a provincial energy strategy, which emphasizes reducing energy use rather than developing additional energy supplies.
2. Establish a Fossil-Fuel Independence Commission to examine ways to reduce and eventually eliminate our dependence on fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas.
3. Develop a comprehensive transportation policy for the province based on localizing (instead of globalizing) production and consumption to reduce the need for transportation.
4. Provide incentives for people, businesses and municipalities to move towards more ecologically friendly forms of transportation.
- 5.

-Urban Centres-

6. Promote compact urban development compatible with mass transit and pedestrian travel.
7. Provide funding to municipalities to make urban public transportation fare-free.
8. Provide funding to municipalities to increase public transportation routes and service frequency.
9. Help municipalities to invest in capital improvements to entice higher ridership – including the completion of the bus rapid transit corridor to the University of Manitoba.

-Active Transportation-

10. Open an Active Transportation Office to promote active transportation in Manitoba's communities through research, programs and citizen-led initiatives.
11. Construct more segregated bike lanes with priority being given to the busiest streets and highways first.
12. Amend the Highway Traffic Act to allow greater use of and safety for human-powered forms of transportation, including entitling cyclists to an entire lane of traffic, rather than only the right hand side, on routes with speed limits lower than 70km/hour

-Rural Areas-

13. Implement programs to help farmers reduce or eliminate their reliance on fertilizers derived from natural gas.
14. Invest in rail transportation, particularly for the movements of goods, which will result in fewer semi-trailers on our highways, less roadway wear and tear, safer roadways and reduced fossil fuel use.
15. Improve inter-city mass transit by removing unnecessary bureaucratic regulations and following Saskatchewan in creating an efficient publicly owned and subsidized inter-city transportation system.
16. Promote airship transportation for northern and remote communities that do not have year-round road access.

-Vehicle Use-

17. Ensure the government purchases emission free, or at minimum, the most fuel-efficient, vehicles available.
18. Mandate the use of fuel-efficient vehicles, by ensuring all new vehicles registered in Manitoba meet the California emissions standard – as promised but not implemented by the current NDP government.
19. Adjust Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) fees so that a proportion of fees is paid on a per kilometre basis (with a basic exemption and differentiated rates for urban and rural drivers) to ensure people are paying insurance in proportion to their chances of causing or being involved in an accident.
20. Create a meaningful fossil-fuel tax (with a basic exemption so that people are not penalized for basic driving needs) to encourage fossil-fuel conservation and to help pay for transportation related costs.

IV. CREATING COOPERATIVE COMMUNITIES

The Green Party supports strong, healthy and inclusive communities by promoting social and economic justice. Manitoba Greens believe that strong communities are the best way to ensure a healthy and sustainable society. We believe communities should be empowered to make decisions that affect them and that all communities should have the resources they need to flourish. The Green Party of Manitoba supports the following policies:

A. The Right to an Education

The Green Party of Manitoba believes that a high quality public education is a right and that all Manitobans should have access to education, not just from kindergarten to Grade 12, but also to post-secondary education -- including universities, colleges and trade programs. A post-secondary education gives Manitobans access to higher-income jobs, and the Green Party plans to move towards a model of universal access to post-secondary education.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

1. Redirect the \$115 million in annual Government of Manitoba education tax credits towards reducing tuition fees and improving teaching and faculty staff salaries.
2. Ensure that all elementary and high schools are adequately funded and able to provide a high calibre education in mathematics, science, languages, sports, music and arts.
3. Support the Manitoba Teachers Society in calling for a defined teacher to student ratio in elementary and high schools.
4. Incorporate more environmental education into the school curricula, through programs such as the "edible school yard" and "Rethinking School Lunch: Linking Food, Culture, Health, and the Environment" (see: www.ecoliteracy.org for more information).
5. Develop training programs in eco-trades, such as green building, community composting, etc, with the possibility of forming a special Sustainability College under The Colleges Act of Manitoba.
6. Create a Crown housing corporation, which can take the lead in Green innovation and development, to help Manitobans replace or upgrade older stock and to meet the need for lower-cost shelter.

B. Universal Basic Income

Economic democracy is required for political democracy. Manitoba Greens believe that no Manitoban should live in poverty and that all Manitobans should have access to an adequate income to meet the basic needs of life. A Universal Basic Income (UBI) is one way to implement the principle of economic security. A UBI would not constitute a 'handout' but rather an investment in our people, to ensure that we can all live with dignity. A UBI would be provided to all adult citizens on an individual basis without discrimination, conditions, or claw-backs. All adult citizens would pay the same tax rate for every dollar earned, and all adults would be guaranteed a basic income.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

1. Open a broad-based discussion on poverty in Manitoba, its causes, and solutions that will work in the long run.
2. Recognize an official Poverty Line based on the low-income cut-off (LICO).
3. Implement, in combination with the federal government, a Universal Basic Income (UBI) benefit for all Manitobans that is tied to the LICO.
4. A UBI would reduce over-lapping bureaucracies administering multiple benefits (Employment Insurance, Employment Income Assistance, etc) in favour of a single UBI benefit.
5. A UBI would be implemented in combination with a simplified level tax system whereby all Manitobans would pay the same rate of tax for every dollar earned and all Manitobans would be guaranteed the same UBI (with additional support for special circumstances such as disabilities). The net effect of such a system would be to raise the basic income tax exemption while at the same time providing a social safety net that ensures all Manitobans a positive cash flow.
6. Retain support programs and services for Manitobans with special needs, such as those living with a disability.

C. Housing for All

Manitobans who are unable to find safe, adequate and suitable housing struggle to maintain their health, find and keep employment, and complete their education. A place to call home should be available to each Manitoban.

The Green Party would work with community-based organizations such as the Right to Housing Coalition, the Social Planning Council and neighbourhood associations to determine needs for social and supportive housing. These organizations would involve local communities in decisions affecting their housing and social needs.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

1. Ensure that the goal of 300 subsidized units per year for five years, as recommended by the Right to Housing Coalition, is met.
2. Promote creative and innovative forms of housing, such as pocket suites, co-housing, conversion of existing buildings, lane-way housing, and integration of housing with community spaces for recreation and services such as community kitchens, child care, and health clinics.
3. Ensure that all social housing is built or renovated to high standards of sustainability and energy efficiency.
4. Develop community-based training programs to increase employment opportunities in building, renovating and maintaining housing stock.

D. Supporting Programs for Youth

We need to recognize that youth in Manitoba do not all share the same advantages and disadvantages. For some of our pre-teens and teens, they leave school each afternoon and enter a world of hockey, dance and music lessons. On the other side of the tracks, our young people cannot afford pricey extracurriculars to develop their interests, nor do many even have access to the internet, where they could learn on their own time. We need to support our young people, as they are Manitoba's most valuable and precious resource.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

1. Advocate for community centres in all constituencies, ensuring they are well and equitably funded and remain open, instead of moving to the centralized mega-community centre model.
2. Ensure that after-school, weekend and summer social programs are adequately funded by the government and supported by local role models in the community.
3. Create innovative social programs in discussion with currently active youth groups in Manitoba.
4. Ensure that all schools with even a small inner city population staff an after-hours and weekend computer lab year-round to allow those students without internet access to complete their school assignments and develop their interests on their free time.
5. Protect current and new social programs for youth for a minimum of 12 years. A stop-and-go philosophy serves no one.
6. Extend broadband internet to all communities.

E. Honouring Aboriginal / First Nations communities

Aboriginal and First Nations Manitobans are a key part of what makes Manitoba and Canada unique. We need to honour and respect these communities and do what we can to ensure that their way of life is preserved.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

1. Honour the sovereignty of all Aboriginal and First Nations communities.
2. Ensure that Aboriginal and First Nations communities retain the right to have the final vote in decisions that may impact their habitats, communities and livelihoods.
3. Engage the Aboriginal and First Nations peoples in running for public office in all stages of government.
4. Ensure that all schools (elementary, secondary) include educational programming regarding the culture of Aboriginal and First Nations peoples in their annual curricula.
5. Provide funding for self-developed social programming in the Aboriginal and First Nations communities.

F. Restorative Justice

The current model of justice is based on punishment and deterrence, both of which are failing to prevent crime and are over-loading our prisons -- to the economic and social detriment of Manitoba. We need a new way of administering justice in Manitoba that is based on healing and learning for victims, offenders and communities. The Manitoba Greens believe that a model of *restorative* (healing- and learning-based) instead of *retributive* (punishment-based) justice, coupled with better socio-economic conditions for Manitobans, is a good way to make real progress on reducing crime and criminal behaviour.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

6. Begin shifting from a punishment-based model of justice towards a restorative, learning model of justice.
7. Deal with root causes of crime such as poverty, inequality, and lack of education or opportunity. Putting money into our community centres and recreation programs for young people will help to prevent crime by engaging them in the community.
8. Make provincial funding for police officers conditional on the implementation of community based policing. We need to get police officers out of their cars and into communities. Studies show that a transition towards community oriented policing strategies, where police

repeatedly service a limited area – often through regular beats -- helps to reduce crime, because the police officers become a part of the neighbourhood, gaining valuable intelligence and community trust at the same time.

9. Lobby the federal government to use community service options for those who have committed non-violent crimes. It is expensive to jail people; let's have them help out our communities instead.
10. Lobby the federal government to protect the current *Young Offenders Act*, and argue against mandatory sentences for certain crimes. Each situation is unique and deserves our due attention.

G. Raising the Standards of Health Care

Manitoba Greens strongly believe in a high quality public health care system that is accessible to all. We are proud that Canada has chosen to support health as a basic human right, and we will continue to stand by our public health care system. Since the provision of health care takes many forms, the evidence for alternative healing practices should also be reviewed.

Currently, the majority of money spent in health care is devoted to end stage disease. It is time we redirect our focus towards the prevention of disease, as this will be a far more sustainable approach.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

1. Provide financial incentives to increase the number and frequency of travelling general practitioners and specialists to rural Manitoba.
2. Increase the number of nursing and allied health professionals, including midwives, to better serve the Manitoban population.
3. Extend coverage for alternative health care treatments that are evidence-based and delivered through properly accredited alternative medicine professionals.
4. Increase the number of general practitioners in Manitoba through time-based financial incentives and by extending accreditation, following an appropriate review of training and credentials, to foreign-trained professionals.
5. Renovate an existing space to serve as a year round preventative health clinic, staffed by psychologists, nurse practitioners, clinical assistants, nurses, dieticians and fitness instructors. This clinic will address chronic health issues that benefit most from a multi-disciplinary approach, including the prevention and treatment of obesity and smoking cessation. Obesity is the most significant health threat in our current era, and

smoking is associated with an impressive list of cancers and chronic illness. The building will also feature comprehensive fitness facilities for patients.

6. Renovate an existing space to serve as a year round clinic, staffed by public health nurses. The clinic would serve to provide routine health services to help reduce wait time for general practitioners. For example such clinics could increase hours of operation during the flu vaccine season, to provide the vaccine to those who choose to take it, helping to reduce congestion in hospitals at the same time.
7. Establish a 1-year deadline for all hospitals in Manitoba to cease serving deep fried foods in hospital cafeterias and to eliminate potato chip and soda pop vending machines.
8. Establish a 1-year deadline for all primary and secondary schools in Manitoba to cease serving deep fried foods in school cafeterias and to eliminate potato chip and soda pop vending machines. Financial subsidies will be provided to support healthier meal solutions.
9. Expand our routine childhood immunization schedule to include administering the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to boys in Grade 6, for those parents who choose to vaccinate their child.

H. Employment and Labour Rights

Manitoba Greens understand that business and labour can co-exist harmoniously. A Green government would be labour friendly.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

1. Actively encourage the constitutional right to collective bargaining, through TV and newspaper advertising.
2. Change the standard hours of work from 40 to 32 hours a week.
3. Remove references to discrimination based on union activities from the *Labour Relations Act* and place them under the *Manitoba Human Rights Act* to be administered by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission.

V. ECOLOGICAL LITERACY (ECO-LITERACY):

LEARNING FROM NATURE TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

"The processes and patterns by which ecosystems sustain themselves have evolved over billions of years. Designing human communities that are compatible with nature's processes requires basic ecological knowledge, which is one of the key components of ecological literacy." -Centre for Ecoliteracy

There is an inherent wisdom in the systems that have developed within nature over the past billions of years. This wisdom is known as ecological literacy (or eco-literacy for short). The basic premise of eco-literacy is that in order to develop a sustainable society, we can and must learn from Nature how it has developed and sustained itself over billions of years.

A. Principles of Ecology

- 1. Nature runs on sunlight
- 2. Nature uses only the energy it needs
- 3. Nature fits form to function
- 4. Nature recycles everything
- 5. Nature rewards cooperation
- 6. Nature banks on diversity
- 7. Nature demands local expertise
- 8. Nature curbs excesses from within
- 9. Nature taps the power of limits

B. The Precautionary Principle

The precautionary approach, taken by a Green Party government, would place the burden of proof on originators of potentially harmful projects, products or technologies. They would be responsible for proving that their product is safe and sustainable, instead of the public having to prove that the product is harmful and unsustainable.

VI. PROTECTING LIVING SYSTEMS

A. Planetary Limits

All species, including humans, are ultimately interdependent.

It is clear that humanity's ' collective impact on the planet continues to increase, as evidenced by increasing rates of extinction, a massive island of garbage in the Pacific Ocean, increasing frequency of weather extremes, lakes choked by algae blooms and dead zones in our oceans

The Green Party recognizes limits to growth. Limits to growth are likely to be imposed primarily by resource depletion and the ever-increasing costs of pollution. Furthermore, land is also in limited supply. An expanding world population demands expanding food supplies. Land must be managed in such a way as to ensure sustainable human development and safeguard biodiversity.

Conservation of land and natural resources will be very important in order to protect the natural environment from pollution and degradation. The Green Party believes that technologies, which promote reuse and recycling of materials and products, should be given priority over the production of goods from newly generated resources. We believe our towns and cities should be structured in such a way as to maximize resource conservation.

We must ensure that living systems: forests, air, water, land and public spaces, are protected now and for future generations. This will require changing current ways of doing things.

B. Protected Areas

Manitoba is blessed to have beautiful pristine wilderness worthy of protection. Greens support the Conservation First Principle that there should be no new or expanded large-scale industrial development in Manitoba until a network of protected areas is reserved which adequately represents the natural region(s) affected by that development.

In the spring of 1999, 8.1% of Manitoba's land mass was protected; more than ten years later that percentage has only increased to 9.2%.¹

Between 1998 and 2005 Manitoba's Mining Industry identified nearly ten million acres of land, and an additional 6% of Manitoba's landmass, for permanent protection. Yet, very little of this land mass has actually been protected.

Clearly much more should and could be done.

¹ Manitoba Wildlands, 2010 Protected Areas Audit.
http://manitobawildlands.org/pdfs/MWL_PA_Audit_2010_ALL.pdf

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

1. Work to establish new protected areas in consultation with affected first nations, local populations, and industry.
2. Permanently protect all existing protected areas (provincial parks, ecological reserves, wildlife management areas), keeping them pristine and free from development activities, including logging, mining, oil exploration and hydro-electric development.
3. Ensure that when an ecological reserve and provincial park reserve are created that they are placed in permanently protected status and cannot lapse back into crown land.
4. Work with local people, affected First Nations, and Métis people to develop a conservation plan for Manitoba's East Shore Wilderness Area, ensuring adequate funding is provided to facilitate community planning.
5. Immediately protect the East Side of Lake Winnipeg from further industrial developments, and submitting the World Heritage Site designation bid as soon as possible -- in consultation with local people, affected First Nations and Métis people.
6. Support the creation of more provincial urban parks, which would consist of walking/bike trails, urban farms, artist studios, cafes, etc. A multi-purpose building will host free weekend programming, including fitness classes and Q and As with local community leaders. The programming will be developed by local Manitobans during monthly "town hall" sessions.

C. Protecting Our Water

The severe flooding throughout the province this past spring greatly demonstrates the need for a sound, comprehensive and province-wide water strategy. The challenge is to maintain and protect our priceless fresh-water resources, while also proactively mitigating losses due to overland flooding. One component to the Manitoba Greens' strategy is wetland restoration: wetlands serve as buffers to the watershed, by filtering contaminants from flowing fresh water. Wetlands also serve as a sink for excess overland water, preventing flooding and resulting property losses. However, wetlands cannot be our sole line of defence. It is vital that Manitobans decrease the amount of contaminants that end up in our fresh water, and reduce our overall consumption of our fresh water resources.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

-Legislation-

1. Ensure water is protected through legally enforceable standards, not just guidelines.
2. Put in place legislation that would prevent privatization of municipal water systems, and prevent bulk water exports.
3. Legislate watershed reserves for the protection of domestic water sources and, within those watersheds, ban logging, road building, pesticide use, grazing and industrial development.
4. Cease depositing untreated human and livestock sewage into waterways.

-Wetland Protection-

5. Prohibit further wetland drainage in Manitoba.
6. Implement province-wide wetlands reclamation program for agricultural areas, modelled upon the successful Alternative Land Use Strategy used in the RM of Blansford.
7. Protect coastal wetlands and ensure no new development activities take place on coastal wetlands.
8. Ensure that large tracts of crown wetlands are permanently protected.

-Municipal Water Systems-

9. Ensure that all building permits for residential, commercial, institutional and industrial buildings include a water reclamation system so that only minimal amounts of treated water are used.
10. Move towards waterless sanitation systems, which utilize low-cost, on-site, excreta recycling technologies giving primacy to dry, composting toilets in all provincial buildings and as a requirement of new developments.
11. Implementing the six essentials of sewer avoidance in all urban areas and housed livestock operations:
 - a) No extension of sewers to currently un-sewered buildings and areas;
 - b) Implementing a rigorous program of internal industrial point-source separation;
 - c) Eliminate the use of materials in consumer goods that are toxic to humans and the environment;
 - d) Cease the sale of kitchen sink garburators;

- e) Develop legislated land-use planning policies that protect ecosystem health;
- f) Install systems designed for on-site conversion of human excreta (feces and urine) into humus (soil organic matter), beginning at the edge of communities whose sewage treatment facilities are already overloaded.

12. Stop the fluoridation of drinking water (as is done in many European nations and Quebec City), and save taxpayers money by providing alternatives such as free toothpaste in schools and at dentists' offices.

D. Protecting Agriculture

We obviously need food to survive, but does it need to travel 1200 kilometres before it reaches your plate?

Manitoba is a province that can produce more than enough food for our own population. Yet, very little of the food Manitobans consume is produced in Manitoba.

The Green Party of Manitoba is the only party to recognize that the key to sustainable agricultural sector and economy is the thriving family farm.

Unfortunately, market conditions over the past several decades have resulted in farm conglomeration and rural depopulation. What is worse is that government policies and programs often have the net effect of exacerbating this trend.

The Green Party of Manitoba feels that redirecting government subsidies away from intensive agricultural practices towards sustainable practices is a logical first step that will help to improve livelihoods for family farms, reduce the ecological footprint, and safeguard the comfort and well-being of livestock at the same time.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

1. Increase research funding, farm extension services and public education for organic and natural farming systems.
2. Redirect subsidies away from larger farms towards start-up and smaller farms to enhance the diversity and resiliency of rural economies.
3. Prevent the approval of new factory farms and begin phasing out existing high-risk operations immediately.
4. Make Manitoba a genetically modified organism (GMO) free zone by enacting legislation which would prevent the introduction of any new GMO crops in Manitoba.

5. Require labelling of all products sold in Manitoba containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs).
6. Supports the right of Manitoba farmers to decide on the future of the Canadian Wheat Board.
7. Restore the right of citizens to sue livestock operations for causing excessive odours.
8. Ensure minimum standards for the humane treatment of farm animals.
9. End government subsidies to transnational corporate slaughterhouses, redirecting it to small-scale agricultural enterprises .
10. Ensure that food handling regulations do not unduly hamper small-producers.

E. Protecting Our Forests & Jobs

Manitoba's forest area is made up of 26.3 million hectares in three different habitats zones: Boreal, broadleaf/mixed wood and small broadleaf forest stands. Wood from felled trees is used for building, heating, and to produce pulp that is later made into paper, while living trees purify the air and water, prevent floods and erosion, and stabilize the climate. Other benefits of our forests include outdoor recreation, hunting, fishing, timber, spiritual retreats, harvesting of food and medicine, and wildlife habitats. Large expanses of old growth forests in northern Manitoba must remain intact in order to maintain these human and ecological values.

When the boreal forest is clear-cut, most of the carbon begins to be released into the atmosphere. When the protective canopy is removed, there is a dramatic change in the microclimate. There is, in addition, loss of the vegetation on the forest floor, especially lichens.

Clear-cutting our forest is unsustainable and forest companies have to move towards a more sustainable practice of selective logging in order to sustain the ecological values important to the green party.

Aboriginal people in over 25 northern Manitoba communities are incorporating Non-Forest Timber Products production into their daily practices. These practices are linked to the Northern Forest Diversification Centre (NFDC), which is promoting sustainability of the forests in a holistic way.

Obviously, such a change will require dramatic modifications in economic and social strategies and systems. Our governments are not making these changes. Greens are ready to protect our forests through policies that would move us away from clear-cutting and export oriented forestry. Any obstacles to protecting our forests should be dismantled.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

-Forestry Operations-

1. Invest in more value-added forestry to reduce our reliance on exporting raw logs, creating more local jobs per log cut.
2. Move away from clear-cut logging towards selective logging by requiring wood producers to increase the life span of their products and to assume the extended responsibility for the life cycle of their product.
3. Cap the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) for all forest management license areas (FMLAs), preventing the expansion of clear-cutting and forestry in Manitoba.
4. Review how Forest Management Licenses are granted and revise the process to be in accordance with the precautionary principle and approach.
5. Eliminate the use of pesticides in forestry because of their negative impacts on biological diversity.
6. Hold public hearings throughout Manitoba with local residents, First Nations people and the logging industry to create provincial standards and best practices that will ensure the long-term health of our forests.
7. Amend the Forest Act of Manitoba to include private woodlots.

-Non-wood Fibres-

8. Promote alternatives such as hemp and agricultural cellulose through the creation of a Non-Timber Forest Products Act in Manitoba.
9. Support the use of hemp by-products in construction activities, such as concrete mixed with hemp fibres – which is both stronger and provides better insulation compared to ordinary concrete.
10. Convert the current newspaper plant in Pine Falls, MB into a hemp producing plant within five years.
11. Create a recycled content standard for paper products sold in Manitoba.

F. Protecting Manitobans from Refuse and Hazardous Materials

Humanity continues to put toxic and hazardous ingredients into our environments. Through various industrial processes, we contaminate the air we breathe and the food we eat. In addition, we continue to improperly dispose of materials.

Greens recognize this needs to change. We cannot afford to increase toxicity, and we can no longer afford to simply throw materials away without considering the principles of reuse and recycle.

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

-Refuse-

1. Create a province-wide public composting program that will decrease our province's demand for landfills, create jobs that stay in Manitoba, and provide Manitoban farmers with a useful resource.
2. Legislate extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws that require industry-funded product stewardship boards for electronics, hazardous materials, and packaging.
3. Mandate a deposit-return system for disposable food and beverage containers sold in Manitoba.

-Pesticides-

4. Implement a pesticide use registry so that those with organic farms and those with chemical sensitivities can be apprised on when pesticides will be applied.
5. Strictly limit the sale of pesticides in Manitoba with an aim to phase them out completely, providing support to farmers during the transition.
6. Immediately implement a ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides, enacting the strongest provisions adopted anywhere in North America.

-Nuclear Waste-

7. Greens oppose the importation, transportation, and storage of high-level radioactive waste created outside of Manitoba and brought into the Province.

-Nanotechnology-

8. Greens oppose the release of nanotechnological and nanobiotechnological (synthetic biology) into the environment.

VII. REBUILDING DEMOCRACY

In a sustainable society, democracy manifests when all members in that society participate. The Manitoba Greens believe that major changes must be made to the way we exercise democracy in Manitoba to ensure that citizen participation is not limited to just once every 4 years. The Green Party of Manitoba is always working to promote our policies and engage people in our party.

A. Proportional Representation

Our voting system is outdated and no longer meets the needs of Manitoba's diverse population. It is a sad state of affairs when politics becomes about voting against something or someone, rather than for something or someone. It doesn't need to be this way. Manitobans used to have an electoral system that included ranked ballots in rural areas and a single-transferable ballot in Winnipeg.

Greens support electoral reform, but such a process needs to be done in consultation with the public. We would establish a Citizens' Assembly, as was done in BC and Ontario, to look at their electoral systems in a non-partisan way. This would be followed by a referendum.

If elected, we would work towards proportional representation, whereby the percentage of votes for a party equals the percentage of seats in the Legislative Assembly, and various groups in society are represented in the Legislature in proportion to their numbers in Manitoban society

HOW WE WOULD DO IT:

1. Hold a Citizens' Assembly on electoral reform, which would select 100 Manitobans from the permanent voters list to look at the current electoral system and:
 - Decide if the current system is meeting the needs of Manitobans
 - If not, find alternative systems that would, and
 - Bring three (3) of these systems to the people of Manitoba for a preferential vote on which system should replace the current system.

Manitoba Greens, if elected, will:

1. Hold regular public meetings in their constituencies.
2. Encourage citizen participation in decision-making, such as budget decisions.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Leader's Message – James Beddome

Green Party of Manitoba: A vote for sustainability, a vote for political honesty!

The world will no longer be divided by the ideologies of 'left' and 'right' but by those who accept ecological limits and those who don't. - Wolfgang Sachs

The Green Party of Manitoba (GPM) was founded in 1998 to create a sustainable and ecologically sound society.

The Green approach is fundamentally unique. Our ideology cuts across traditional political classifications: we are neither right nor left. We continue to move forward to tackle new challenges facing the sustainability of our society today.

Sustainability is about survival. Manitoba's survival today depends on a strong economy, a united community of citizens and a sound environment. We are all connected. A daughter cannot attend school if her family depends on her to work. A farmer cannot feed his family if the land is polluted and unsafe. We need to work together with our environment if we are to give our great-grandchildren the gift of a safe home in Manitoba.

Momentum continues to build around the Green movement as the need for new ideas and new ways of thinking become more apparent. There are more than 100 Green parties worldwide, and Greens have been elected and form parts of governing coalitions in dozens of countries. Recently, Green Party of Canada leader Elizabeth May was elected to Parliament, proving that Greens can be elected under the current Canadian simple majority electoral system.

Greens are the only party prepared to stand up and speak honestly about the challenges and opportunities facing Manitobans today. Meeting these challenges and opportunities will not be easy. It requires the will to do the right thing! It requires compassion and respect! It requires real and hard solutions, rather than a quick fix that does not tackle the root causes. In the current election, Manitoba Greens are the only party up to this challenge.

While other political parties only look ahead to the next election, Greens see several generations into the future. While other political parties change their tune based on the latest opinion poll, we remain committed to our policies because they were designed with the public good in mind.

True leaders pursue innovative, novel, and sometimes even unpopular, policies for the benefit of the greater good. The Green Party is prepared to be that leader for Manitoba today.

For more than a decade, the Green Party of Manitoba has been at the forefront of innovative thinking. Even outside of the Legislature, we have been influential in shaping public policy in Manitoba. Many of our ideas have been picked up and adopted by other political parties (often though in a diluted form).

If you believe in our platform, if you are looking for a political party that is willing to stand up and say what needs to be said, then we ask that you join the Green Party of Manitoba in enacting real change. We ask that you vote Green.

We don't really think of ourselves as politicians, just ordinary citizens making an extraordinary commitment.

Please remember that there is no such thing as a wasted vote. Every Green vote, regardless of the electoral outcome, will help to keep our elected officials honest.

We feel that honesty in politics is a forgotten virtue and we hope that with your help, we can bring honesty back to politics.

When we introduce new idea ideas to voters, we win.

When we stay true to our principles, we win.

When our candidates speak truth from the heart, we win.

When other parties "borrow" our ideas and start thinking green, we win.

When people who have given up on politics are inspired to vote, we win.

When you vote for the Green Party, we will win – and so will you.

On October 4, 2011, vote Green!

Sincerely,

James Beddome,
Leader, Green Party of Manitoba